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Umno-Zahid (Confession)

ZAHID ADMITS BEING TOLD BY ANWAR TO RAISE ISSUES ON NEPOSITM

KUALA LUMPUR, June 20 (Bernama) -- Former Umno Youth head Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi admitted today that he was told by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to raise the issues on nepotism and cronyism during the Umno General Assembly last year.

He also admitted that the former Deputy Prime Minister had given him business opportunities including ownership of shares in listed companies on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange (KLSE).

"I take this opportunity to seek forgiveness from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the things I did when I was leading the Umno Youth movement," he said in a statement to the press at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), here.

Ahmad Zahid, who had a meeting with Dr Mahathir during the break at the Umno General Assembly here today, also admitted that Anwar had asked him to raise issues on the lack of transparency in the allocation of shares and government contracts when Anwar was Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister.

Following Ahmad Zahid's action then, Dr Mahathir had issued the list of recipients of shares in government projects, and yesterday issued the list of recipients of special shares and privatisation projects given to Anwar's cronies.

Zahid's name was mentioned in both the lists as among Anwar's supporters who benefited from the government projects.

This is the first time the former Umno Youth head had made a public confession on his role in Anwar's plans to topple the party's leadership by alleging that the government was practising cronyism and nepotism.

"I pledge and promise to be loyal to the party's cause and to uphold the sovereignty of Umno's struggles and state my loyalty to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as Prime Minister and Umno president to continue to strengthen the party under whatever circumstances," he said.

Ahmad Zahid hoped his explanation would put to rest the allegations questioning his loyalty to the party and its struggles.

When officiating the general assembly on Friday, Dr Mahathir had exposed Anwar's plans to topple the Umno leadership and had implemented measures inspired by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which caused further deterioration in the country's economic situation in the hope that the last Umno general assembly would put pressure on the party president to step down.

Ahmad Zahid urged all Umno members to unite and direct their efforts to ensure victory for the Barisan Nasional in the coming general election.

When asked why he had taken such a long time to make the confession, he said he had not been given the opportunity to meet Dr Mahathir all this while.

His meeting with the Prime Minister today was used to explain several issues relating to Anwar's action and to state his stand.

The stand was made long ago but was only announced after the meeting with Dr Mahathir, he said.

Ahmad Zahid advised Anwar's supporters to accept self-criticism over what they had done and to return to the right path.

-- BERNAMA

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